CURSE OF THE SPAWN

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THE WAY IS LONG. THE GAP IS DEEP. THE GULF BETWEEN WHAT WAS, AND WHAT IS NOW... UNFATHOMABLE.
I STAND WATCH, A LONELY VIGIL, AS YET ANOTHER ONE PASSES FROM MY WORLD. SHOULD I WEEP?
... GRACE UPON THE DEARLY DEPARTED...
CAN THAT CRAP, PADRE. WE GOT FOURTEEN MORE OF THESE ALLEY-RAT BASTARDS TO PLANT. OUGHTTA JUST HAUL 'EM AWAY WITH THE REST OF THE TRASH.
YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK.

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
YOU AIN'T ROBBIN' ME NO MORE.
YOU CRAP-STAINS DEAD?
Huh?
YOU LIKE THAT!?!
WELL, YOU AIN'T DEAD ENOUGH FOR ME.
ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST. ISN'T THAT WHAT THEY SAY? ON HIS WAY TO HEAVEN, OR HELL. THERE'S NO MIDDLE GROUND ANYMORE.

MURDER.
SUICIDE.
THE FERAL FEEDING ON CARRION.
NO ONE TO MOURN. NO ONE TO CARE. REST IN PIECES. BLEED AWAY YOUR SADNESS.
No Solicitors
THIS IS THE WORLD WE'VE MADE FOR OURSELVES.
NO LOITERING
NO TRESPASSING
BEWARE OF OWNER
ABSOLUTELY NO RELIGIOUS FANATICS!
A WORLD AT WAR. WITH NO WINNERS. NO LOSERS. ONLY DRYING POOLS OF CRIMSON. THE TEARS OF MAN'S FALL.

NO LONGER ANY ROOM FOR REPENTANCE OR REDEMPTION-- THE OPPORTUNITY TOO OFTEN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE NEXT DOOR, OR AROUND THE NEXT CORNER... WHERE NO ONE CHOOSES TO LOOK.
THAT'S WHERE I LIVE. WHERE I WORK. WHERE I WAIT. BUT NO ONE EVER COMES.
AT LEAST, NO ONE WORTHY.
I MISS THE TIME OF THOUGHT. OF DECISION. WHEN COMPLEXITIES OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT MADE THE JOB WORTHWHILE.
I COME FOR ANOTHER CHANCE. THIS IS THE PLACE, ISN'T IT? ISN'T IT?!
DIDN'T YOU READ THE SIGNS ON THE DOOR?
I WANT MY SECOND CHANCE!
NO TRES-PASSING.
ANOTHER ONE FOR THE RIVER. STYX TODAY, OR MAYBE LETHE-- THEY CHANGE SO OFTEN.
BUT THE CURRENT ALWAYS CARRIES THEM IN THE SAME DIRECTION.
SOUTH.
BUT, AS IS WRITTEN, NEARER TO THE END, ALL WILL BECOME CLEAR. THE MASKS WILL SLIP. THE LINES OF BATTLE WILL BE DRAWN.

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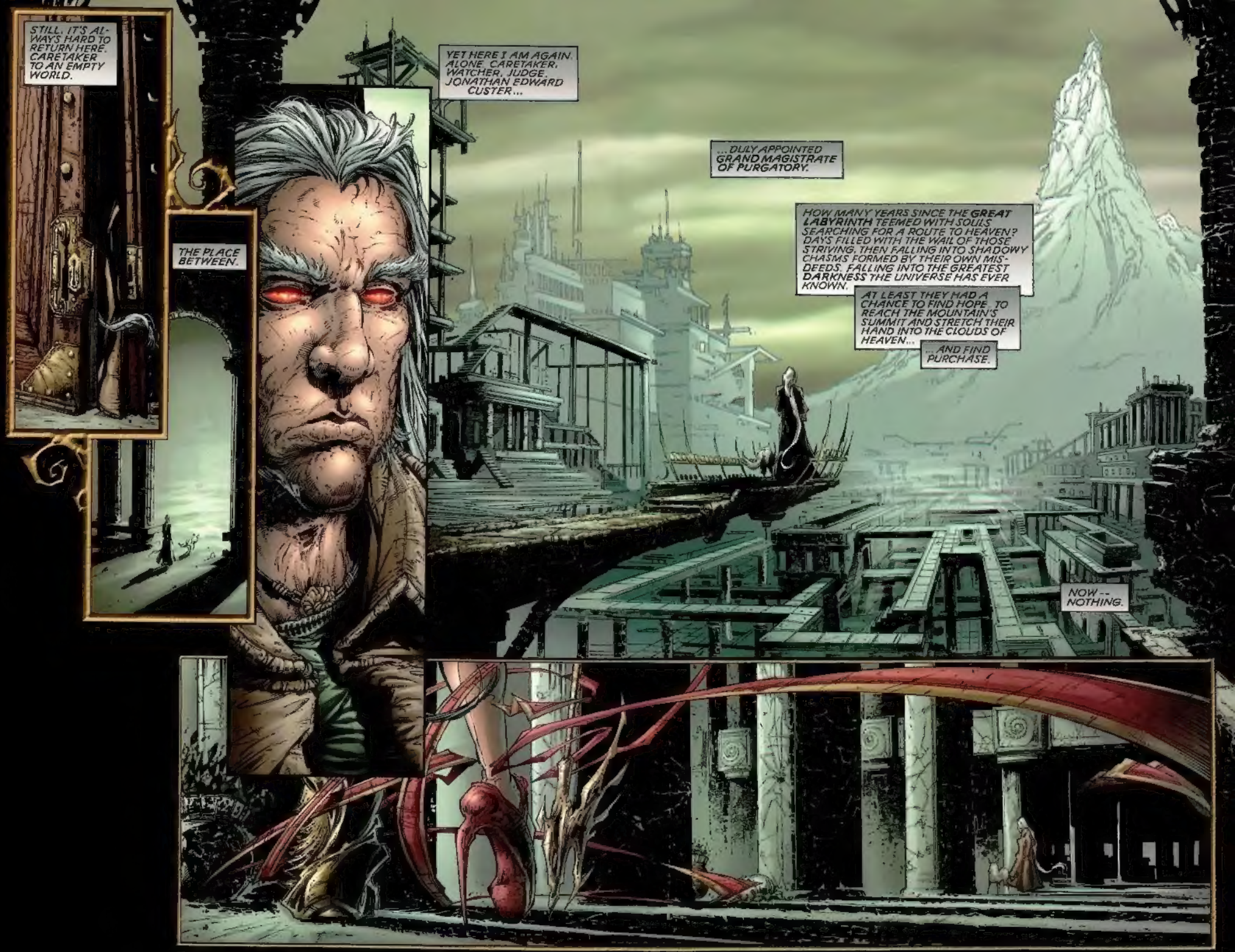
STILL. IT'S ALWAYS HARD TO RETURN HERE. CARETAKER TO AN EMPTY WORLD.
THE PLACE BETWEEN.
YET HERE I AM AGAIN. ALONE. CARETAKER. WATCHER. JUDGE. JONATHAN EDWARD CUSTER...
...DULY APPOINTED GRAND MAGISTRATE OF PURGATORY.
HOW MANY YEARS SINCE THE GREAT LABYRINTH TEEMED WITH SOULS SEARCHING FOR A ROUTE TO HEAVEN? DAYS FILLED WITH THE WAIL OF THOSE STRIVING, THEN FALLING INTO SHADOWY CHASMS FORMED BY THEIR OWN MISDEEDS. FALLING INTO THE GREATEST DARKNESS THE UNIVERSE HAS EVER KNOWN.
AT LEAST THEY HAD A CHANCE TO FIND HOPE. TO REACH THE MOUNTAIN'S SUMMIT AND STRETCH THEIR HAND INTO THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN...
...AND FIND PURCHASE.
NOW -- NOTHING.

HELLO, CUSTER. YOU SURE TOOK YOUR SWEET TIME COMING BACK HERE. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DAYS, WHEN I COULD HAVE BEEN IN THE OUTER-ELSE, KILLING DEMONS.
NO MATTER. I'VE BEEN SENT WITH THIS DECREE FROM ON HIGH. "PURSUANT TO A RECENT REVIEW OF STATUS REPORTS BEARING ON..." BLAH, BLAH, SO FORTH AND SO ON. YOU CAN READ IT FOR YOURSELF.
IN SHORT, PURGATORY IS BEING *SHUT DOWN*, THE REAL ESTATE TO BECOME PROPERTY OF THE WARHOSTS FOR USE AS A TRAINING FACILITY.

NO, KYMBERLI, PLEASE...
SORRY, BUT IT'S JUST NOT NEEDED ANY-MORE.
THESE DAYS, PEOPLE ARE EITHER GOOD, OR EVIL. NO GREY AREA.
... PURGATORY IS MY *LIFE*. WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? THIS PLACE IS MY REASON FOR BEING.
MAYBE YOU COULD STAY ON AS A GROUNDSKEEPER OR SOMETHING. YOU'LL HAVE TO TAKE IT UP WITH THE OLD LADY.
WHAT'RE WE GOING TO DO, GARTH? THIS PLACE HAS BEEN OUR PURPOSE.
WE CAN'T JUST WALK AWAY. I HAVE TO MAKE PURGATORY *MATTER*. I HAVE TO MAKE IT *USEFUL* AGAIN.
I NEED *SOULS*... PEOPLE WHO COULD GO EITHER WAY. GOOD OR EVIL, HEAVEN OR HELL.
FENCE-STRADDLERS.
AND I NEED THEM *NOW*.

ARE WE HAVING FUN YET?
Heh Heh
SERIOUSLY, WHAT DO YOU BOYS MAKE, SEVEN BUCKS AN HOUR? I DON'T THINK THAT'S WORTH YOUR LIVES, DO YOU?
GOODIE BAGS, PLEASE. OR I GO POSTAL WITH MY BOOM-STICK!
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM

SEE. HE TOLD YA.
NOW IT GETS REAL UGLY.
HEY, MAN... DON'T. NOBODY GETS HURT, REMEMBER?
LET'S TALK ABOUT IT IN RIO.
KA-BOOM

GET IN THE CAR, MAN.
LET'S GO!
LET'S GO!
EEERRRR
YEAH, WELL, TOO FRIGGIN' LATE. WE'RE POOR, WE GOT FAMILIES, AND WE GOT PROBLEMS ONLY COLD HARD CASH CAN SOLVE.
IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO GO DOWN THIS WAY, ZACK.
COME ON, WAYNE. WE DID THIS TO SURVIVE.
DEVIN DIDN'T SURVIVE, DID HE?

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FORTUNE FAVORS THE BOLD, eh, GARTH?
THIS IS THE POLICE.
PULL YOUR CAR OVER IMMEDIATELY!
I GOT SOMETHING THEY CAN PULL.
ZACK, DON'T--
THIS LITTLE PIGGIE WENT TO MARKET!
BRRRRRR

ERRRRRRRRCH!
KRAK!
THOSE LITTLE PIGGIES WENT WEE, WEE, WEE, ALL THE WAY HOME.
WHAT'VE WE DONE...
QUIT YOUR WHININ', COUNT THE MONEY WE GOTTA DITCH THIS RIDE.

HEY, LOOK OUT!
GET OFF ME!
YOU'RE GONNA HIT HIM!
GAS STATION
99¢ Hot Dogs

TEXXON
TEXXON
BOOM!
WHERE ARE WE?
HURRY, GENTLEMEN! THE DOOR DOESN'T STAY OPEN FOR VERY LONG!

NOT YOU, ZACK SORRY
WHAA--?!
YOU BURNED YOUR BRIDGES, AND YOURSELF ALONG WITH THEM
AAAH!
WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
IT'S QUITE SIMPLE. YOU'RE BOTH DEAD. THIS PLACE IS PURGATORY. WHERE YOU POOR SOULS WILL HAVE TO PROVE YOUR WORTH BY SCALING THE MAZE TO THE EDGE OF HEAVEN. OR FAIL AND FALL INTO HELL. THAT'S WHERE ZACK IS. ASS-SLAVE TO SOME DEMON BY NOW.
THE FUTURE OF YOUR SOULS IS MEASURED AGAINST THE CLOCK OF REDEMPTION. WHEN THE CLOCK STRIKES TWELVE, YOUR CHANCE FOR SALVATION IS OVER.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT, MAN. WE'RE ASLEEP, HAVIN' A NIGHT-MARE.
WE HIT THAT GAS STATION. I FELT MY LIFE COME UNDONE. WE'RE DEAD.

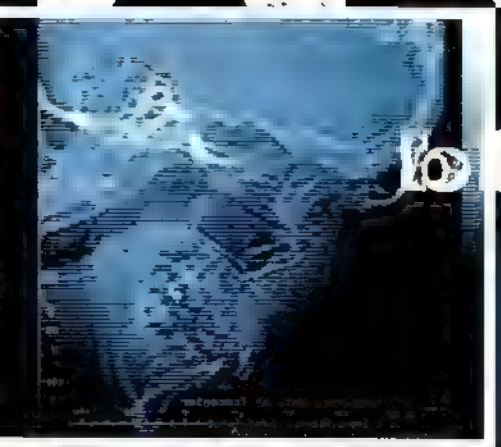
THE CLOCK IS TICKING, GENTLEMEN.
I WANNA GET TO HEAVEN. I WANNA SECOND CHANCE. I WANNA MAKE THINGS RIGHT WITH GOD.
CRAZY, MAN. ALL OF IT.
THIS IS MORE LIKE IT, GARTH. LIKE THE OLD DAYS.
THIS WAY.
IT'S ANOTHER DEAD END. THAT WAY.
OH MY GOD...

I HAD A WIFE, THREE CHILDREN MY WIFE WILL BECOME AN ALCOHOLIC.
SHE'LL LOSE THE KIDS.
MY YOUNGEST DAUGHTER WILL GET INTO PORN, EVENTUALLY DIE OF A HEROIN OVERDOSE
MY SON WILL DIE OF AIDS IN PRISON. ALL BECAUSE OF YOU!
CLICK
WAYNE! DON'T DROP ME, MAN...! I DON'T WANNA BURN!

AHHHHH!
HE SLIPPED A LONG TIME AGO.
NO TIME TO LAY ABOUT, WAYNE. IT'S FIVE MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT.
GOD FORGIVE ME.
GOD FORGIVE ME.
GOD FORGIVE ME.
YES, LOOK AT HIM. PUSHING HIS SPIRIT AS NEVER BEFORE.

THIS ONE'S GOING TO MAKE IT.
HEAVEN...
I'M TOUCHING -
PURGATORY IS IMPORTANT IT SERVES A PURPOSE.
GAAA
NO

THAT WAS PATHETIC, BUT NOT UNEXPECTED. YOUR PRIDE HAS DESTROYED YOUR PERSPECTIVE, CUSTER.
GOD NEEDS ME HERE, KYMBERLI! PEOPLE NEED A SECOND CHANCE.
PEOPLE KNOW THE WAY TO HEAVEN. THEY JUST HAVE TO CHOOSE. LIGHT OVER DARKNESS. GOOD OVER EVIL. THE ROAD IS ALWAYS THERE.
DON'T FEEL BAD THAT IT'S OVER, MY FRIEND. IT'S SIMPLY TIME TO COME HOME. YOU'VE EARNED YOUR REST
END
JOHN 3:16
The gates of Hell are locked from the inside.
--C.S. Lewis
THE END.



blah blah blah

w/terry fitzgerald

tdfitz@aol.com

Welcome back this month. I just returned from the International Toy Fair in New York this morning and what a show it was! In case you have been living under a rock the past two weeks, Todd was the anonymous bidder who won the auction for Mark McGwire's number 70 home run ball. Todd also purchased Mark's first home run ball, 63, 67, 68, and 69 as well as the grand daddy 70. Sammy Sosa's 33, 61 and 66 home run balls will join Mark's in Todd's collection as well. Sammy's 33 is an interesting ball in that he hit twenty homers in one month setting a new Major League record for the most home runs hit in one month ever. Now that is an incredible feat. The nine balls in all will tour America and the rest of the world, including Asia, over the coming months and years.

Todd would like to take the balls to every major league stadium so the true fans can see this incredible collection. He also plans to take the balls to Canadian cities without ball clubs, like Vancouver and Calgary. There are also plans to use the balls for charitable purposes to be announced later. The charity foundation is to be named after Todd and his wife Wanda. Expect to see charities in connection with cancer research, children and even animals featured in the foundation. Don't be surprised if you hear that the balls are coming to your hometown as part of the traveling road show. And in a few years? I would expect the balls to wind up in Cooperstown, the baseball hall of fame.

As you can see from the two included photos, the balls are under constant heavy security. The fine folks from Brinks hand delivered the balls to the press conference at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan, February 8th. At precisely 10AM, Todd took the stage in front of one hundred journalists from all over the world to make the announcement the balls were his. After a very poignant speech, the floor was opened for questions.

The next two days Todd spent every waking moment doing television, radio and newspaper interviews. The two most interesting both happened on Tuesday. At 7:30AM, we were at the Today show. While Todd appeared live with the balls in a one on one segment with Matt Lauer, I was making out with Katie Couric in the green room. OK, there was no making out... but she is just as cute in person as she is on the 55" big screen.

After Todd exchanged home phone numbers with Joe Garagiola at the NBC studios of the Today show, it was off to the Howard Stern radio show (my personal fave of all the press outings). We were met at the door by Ba Ba Booey himself and then quickly whisked off to the green room so Todd could be interrogated by the camera folk from E!. Meanwhile, Carmen Bryant who worked the PR end for TMP was very interested in Ba Ba Booey and snuggled close to him on the couch. Todd was called into the studio around 9:45 and for close to 45 minutes discussed everything from the balls to comics, to toys, to sex with Howard, Jackie, Fred and Robin. Todd also showed Howard a prototype of an action figure bearing his likeness. Everyone loved it including the man himself, even though he thought he was a little prettier than the sculpted figure.

After the interview ended, we were all invited to join Todd in the studio for photos with the King of All Media. Can I say that both Howard and Robin were nice to us and allowed us to take as many pics as we wanted. Can I also say that Robin is as beautiful in person as she is on the 55". In fact she made me long forget about Katie. Expect to see the photo of Howard and myself and maybe even Todd in a later blah. I will be the one who looks like a little kid next to the towering inferno named Mr. Stern who, I swear, is seven feet tall.. Oh yeah, the real doll is something else, very realistic looking but oddly very dead-like.

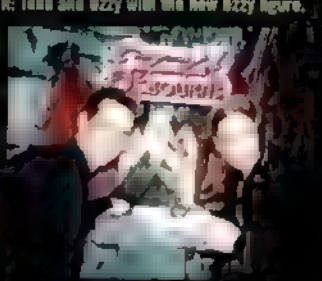
Well that's it for this month... next month part two of the New York experience.

Take care,
terry fitzgerald

"Todd also purchased Mark's first home run ball, 63, 67, 68, and 69 as well as the grand daddy 70."

L: The balls arrive at the Plaza Hotel by way of armored car. R: Todd at ABC News.

L: Todd gets ready for the press conference. R: Todd and Ozzy with the new Ozzy figure.



Curse Words

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A big thanks to all the regular readers of *Curse of the Spawn*. As you may or may not be aware of it, this will be the last issue. The decision to end this series was a difficult one and made after considering many factors. We are, however, introducing several other Spawn-related books over the next several months and would like you to check them out and let us know what you think. The first book to debut is *Spawn: The Dark Ages* coming out next month. This is a story about a Spawn set in England around the early 1100's, a time of Crusades, castles and kings. I hope you enjoy this new series featuring the writing talents of Brian Holguin, the art of Liam McCormack-Sharp, and the coloring by Brian Haberlin. Please write to me and let me know your opinions.

I'd also like to let you know where the artists from the Curse are being assigned so you can follow their work. Dwayne Turner and Chance Wolf are taking on the task of a second Spawn book. It will be written by Paul Jenkins who is also writing our first ever *Spawn Annual*. The coloring on this new book will be handled by Todd Broeker and his crew. Clayton Crain will be temporarily assigned to pencil four issues of *KISS: Psycho Circus* while Angel Medina is penciling a four-issue mini-series of Sam & Twitch. Watch for these new books and let me know what you think. Again, thanks for following *Curse of the Spawn*.

Dear Todd McFarlane

First I would just like to let you know that I love *Spawn* and I am glad that you created my favorite comic character. When I first heard of *Spawn*, like so many others, I wrote it off as a satanic comic book and kept my distance. It wasn't until I read issue #54 (which threw me off at first with Spawn's throne of dead bodies) that my opinion changed. After reading #54 I became a true fan; I bought every issue after that and I have TPB's 1, 5, 6 and the Angela TPB. Whenever I see a *Spawn* back issue that I don't have, I grab it. You are truly the greatest. Your writing is supreme and you improve with every issue. I must also say that Greg does some of the best pencils in the business and accompanying inks from you and Miki perfect the dark mood ness of *Spawn's* atmosphere.

Enough with the praises though. What I really wanted to address are the reasons why *Spawn* readers like myself do or don't read *Curse of the Spawn*. I will admit that I am not a regular Curse reader (I only have issues 4, 9-11 and 21) but the intentions of the Curse books do intrigue me. The idea of other Spawns is interesting and I do enjoy stories when I see characters like Angela, Sam and Twitch apart from the regular *Spawn* book. However, since I am a Spawn (Al Simmons) fan, when the Curse book deals with other Spawns, I enjoy the stories but I don't feel for them as I do for Al.

You see the Spawn I have grown to love has been developed as a character for five years and over 74 current comics. Daniel Llanso and that new Zombie Spawn in Curse 22 just don't have the chance to "grow" on a reader like me, and since their story arcs usually only last about three or four issues, if I don't like them initially, I never will. I know that you don't want to drag the stories of other Spawns out for 70+ issues and create another *Spawn* story in the Curse books, so you keep the story arcs short and to the point. That works for some, but for readers like me who never get the chance to get to know about this new Spawn, it is a turn-off.

Therefore, I pose a solution to the problem, which you have already hit on. Write more stories in the Curse books about characters in the regular *Spawn* series that aren't always in the limelight like Al Simmons is! As you read in "Curse Words" many readers praised you for issues 5-8 highlighting Sam and Twitch. I personally enjoyed issues 9-11, which shed light on Angela's origin, past and character. When you take a character from the *Spawn* book and write a story arc on that character in Curse, the pages are not used to introduce the character; the pages are used on the story. Plus, since many readers will already know of this character, more time can be focused on the deeper plot lines and characterization that a mature ongoing comic such as *Spawn* has, rather than the shallow introductions a new comic requires. I do understand that you wanted the *Curse of the Spawn* to be separate from the *Spawn* comic, but for heaven's sake, it's got Spawn in the title. If you enjoy the Curse, you should get into *Spawn* as well. Besides, readers such as myself love it when we learn more about characters we have been dying to see more of.

The only complaint I have against the Curse books is when you deal with future Spawns such as Daniel. If there are future Spawns, that would imply that Al is not the last Spawn, so the curse is never broken and Armageddon either came and went or hasn't started yet. This poses two problems. Isn't Armageddon supposed to be the final war, meaning no more Spawns? And if Armageddon hasn't occurred yet, then why is Bootsy trying to prevent Al from dying so that Armageddon doesn't start until heaven is ready for it?

I have one more question. Will you do a story arc on Cogliostro's past as the Count and as a Spawn in upcoming *Spawn* or Curse issues? Best regards.

Georges Banks, Jr. Age 16
Moreno Valley, California

I agree with you on most of your points. You're right but the reason I can't get too passionate about the other versions of the *Spawn* characters outside of Al Simmons is because they don't have a chance to grow not only on you, the reader, but on myself. That comes from reading issue after issue about the same person and getting to know what's inside his head and what motivates him and why his world is what it is because of his existence. As soon as you take a character and put him in three or four issues, even though it's very interesting and intriguing, sometimes you

get to the end of a story arc and find that you have more questions about the character than you did when you started. This is a good sign because it means you are somewhat interested, but at the same time it leaves you a bit frustrated because you only felt like you got the first chapter of what could potentially be a long epic.

Along those lines, this is why this issue will be the last of *Curse of the Spawn*, and we'll be cycling into a new book called *Spawn:The Dark Ages* which will focus on one specific Spawn and help build a history behind him so he will grow on you and other readers. Then you can get into the entire mythos and not feel like five or six issues into it, you're into a futuristic story with three thousand years separation.

As for your solution to showcase other characters, we will be bringing out another book which will be a Sam & Twitch title. It will show them apart from the arrangement they have with Spawn and deal with some of the detective elements that come with being New York police officers. Also, we have another book in the planning stage that deals with Al Simmons which will give us two books per month. With 44 pages it will, potentially, give us more area to highlight some of the characters you have grown to like such as Jason Wynn, Antonio Twistelli, Tiffany, Angela, and Violator. So look for that to be happening in the future, too.

In reference to your questions about Armageddon and the future stories we tell, comic books have always used the theory that anything you use in the future may happen in another time paradox or another dimension. It's not necessarily in a linear manner; it may not be the exact same earth you're reading about today. When you read a futuristic *Superman* story it doesn't necessarily mean it's the same Metropolis that you're reading about in the comic books as of 1999. This allows us to do these cool slants on some of these characters and icons while at the same time not worrying that in twenty years when you get to the date of the future story, you're still dealing with Clark Kent, the original Superman. Just apply those same comic book rules to the future stories we have here.

We'll eventually get around to filling you in on Cogliostro's past, so hang on tight. Thanks for your letter.

Dear Mr McFar ane

I f nd it hornby ironic that at the same time you ve sent out feelers asking readers why they do or don't read comics, you've announced that not only are you chang ng the format of *Spawn* but you're handing over the writer's chores as well

I've read again and again how you're going to phase out the spiritual heaven-and-hell stuff and turn *Spawn* into more of a f lm-noir, detective story like Seven. I'm sure I don't speak for all of your readers, but it is those very "sp r.tual"elements that attracted me to your work in the first place; it separated *Spawn* from all the other "gritty" comics out there

You give the readers the option to stick around and see where it goes and yet here comes Brian Holguin tak ng over the scripting department. Another reason why I ve stuck with *Spawn* is because you've had direct involvement in it not just your name slapped on the cover somewhere. I imagine with your interests in film, animation, toys, soundtracks, hockey teams and what have you, that there is little time in the day for you to script the stories anymore Fine. However, loyal fan and cynic alike may then say, "We l, if Todd doesn't have the time to write his own comic, maybe I don t have the time to buy it either." And we ll a.l run off to go watch a mov e, buy a CD, play hockey or whatever

As for *Curse of the Spawn*, I wonder if people are really into buying three or four dreary, hope ess issues that are left unresolved in a dreary, hope ess state. At least the regular *Spawn* has an ongoing cast of characters and situations that keep readers interested by providing them some frame of reference and continuity

Despite everything I ve ind cated in this letter, I am a huge admirer of your work and your accompl shments. Hopefu ly, I ll have reason to continue to be. Thank you for your time

Sincerely,
Robert Wo pert
Altamonte Springs, Flor da

Robert, after reading your letter I wish I could say the same thing, that life is as simple as both you and I would like it to be, but unfortunately that's not the fact. Although the *Spawn* book will be getting more into a film-noire state, it does not preclude the fact that we can still have lots of the cool fantasy elements. I'm just saying that since there will be a 51/49 percent split, I'm always going to lean to the side of dark, urban stories, tales that potentially take place in the real world. If you took Spawn out of the equation, we'd still have angels and we'd still have elements of Hell. The Clown and the Violator will make their return appearances and we'll have all the things you grew into. But at the same time, I'm trying to stoke the direction of this book to get it into more of a horror or thriller vein instead of a super hero vein which I believe we've done enough of in the past five or six years.

The reason I gave up some of the work on the book as you indicated is because there are only 24 hours in a day and I am involved in some of the other interests I have. It doesn't mean I'm ignoring the direction or not guiding where *Spawn* is going in the future. If you decided to leave a comic book every time a creative person left, I'd have to say that within two years you'd probably not be collecting any comic books. The average span for anybody on any book is usually around ten to twelve issues. I've kept my involvement on close to 80 consecutive issues; I don't think that's something to be slighted. I think that's something we should be asking other people in the creative community who don't do the million other things I do. Let's ask them why they can't be involved with their comic books for 80 issues given that they are doing a fraction of what I do in any given day. I find it amusing that people who only have one job while I was writing, penciling and inking, somehow can't stay on the book for twenty issues. Here I am, trying to conquer the world and I can still have direct involvement in the book. None of the mediums I'm working on are singular, creative mediums whether they are the comic books, toys, the music videos, movies or the animation; you need the help of others around you. Nobody seems to worry that when somebody is making a movie he is doing it all himself. We seem to have a bit of a warped sense that I must continue to do every single piece of the comic book until the day I die. What's more of a concern to me is not having Todd McFarlane do *all* the work, but having Todd McFarlane do the *best* work he possibly can. If there comes a time (which happened years ago) where I can't completely, 100 percent focus on something, then I need to get people to help me. If I were stubborn, then I feel the book would have deteriorated into a mass heap because I wasn't able to dedicate enough hours in the day to the specific goals of the comic book. Instead you were able to see the phenomenal work of Greg Capullo and see his growth as well as the talents of Danny Miki, Brian Holguin and the continuing coloring and lettering efforts of Brian Haberlin and Tom Orzechowski. My only goal in all these things is to make the best product possible, whether I do 99 percent of it or I just do the guidance and leadership of it. When it's all said and done and I can answer the question "Would I like this book?" and the answer is "Yes," then I've done my job It's just a matter of giving it to the consumers and seeing if they agree. Thanks for your letter and take care.

TODD MCFARLANE'S

Spawn

On the twilight of it's third season, and after two seasons of the highly acclaimed HBO Spawn Animated Series we thought it was about time we got all our demons in a row. What follows is a checklist of sorts, a detailed, guided tour through the dark halls of Spawn The Animated Series. Every character has been documented, every eye has been poked. Turn out your lights Turn up the volume and get ready for Spawn.

Season One

HBO'S SPAWN THE ANIMATED SERIES.

It is time for a new warrior to emerge from the darkness
Steve Niles

Episode 1 The Burning Vision

Rat-City. On the trail of the story of the century two reporters meet with their secret source only to be cut down in a bloody rain of bullets by mob hit-men sent to silence them. But there is a new occupant dwelling in the shadows of the alley. His name is SPAWN. He deals with the mob thugs killing them quickly and harshly.

Spawn knows death. He is a dead man returned to the living by the forces of Hell. What he doesn't know is who or what he is now. Enter Clown, a mysterious and ubiquitous demon sent from Hell to help shape and guide him into his new role as demonic warrior. To balance the assault of information Spawn meets a mysterious old homeless man named [illegible]. He will try to help and guide him, but for now Spawn must learn a few lessons on his own.

Spawn takes the fact that he's dead. He was once known as AL SIMMONS, soldier and government assassin. He learns in a conversation with his own corpse that he made a deal with one of Hell's masters, MALEBOLGIA. The deal is simple: set him free, Wanda and he will become Hellspawn, a ranking officer in the devil's army. But Wanda has remarried his best friend TERRY FITZGERALD and have had a baby together named CYAN. Wanda has started her life over.

Mafia head honcho, TONY TWIST wants to know who killed his men. Tony's men were working for JASON WYNN who used his mob connections to wipe out anyone who could trace back a dark secret to one of Wynn's puppets. The puppet is SENATOR MCMILLIAN who's son happens to be a child killer. For now McMillian and his secret are safe.

Episode 2 Evil Intent

Child killer and demon in training BILLY KINCAID murders again and dumps the body in the alley where Spawn has found a home among the homeless. Only GAREB, one of the homeless, defends Spawn and welcomes him to the fold of the lost.

Suddenly the alley is invaded by three more of Tony Twist's boys. They want to know who killed their men and are willing to murder a bum or two to find out. Spawn intercedes and wipes out the thugs, leaving one alive to return with a message: Stay out of the alley. The homeless are grateful and open their hearts and alley to Spawn, now the alley's defender. But now Tony Twist has been pushed too far. He calls in his markers and has a deadly foe sent in to do his dirty work.

New York Harbor. Senator McMillian is brought by force in the middle of the night to a meet with Jason Wynn. Jason has plans for the senator. He wants to run for president so that he will, "have a friend in high places." The senator resists, but Wynn reminds him of his son the child killer, DETECTIVE BURKE and his partner TWITCH have arrived in the alley and are looking over the scene of Spawn's latest work. Together they've pieced together the mystery of the dead reporters. He snaps and he wiped out mob thugs.

Meanwhile, Tony's marker has arrived in the form of a hulking brute, an unflinching assassin called OVERKILL. His assignment: find out who popped Tony's boys and tear him apart.

On a hunch cop Spawn perches and broods as Clown approaches for another round of taunts. Clown wants Spawn to deliver on his end of the deal. He got to see Wanda now it's time for the earth to burn. But Spawn has other ideas. He has his own problems, but Clown doesn't want to hear it, and shows Spawn his true self: the hideous demon known as the VIOLATOR. The world die. Spawn leaves, badly.

Clown leaves the Hellspawn with a message. "There's something in you, the Malebolgia senses. Something evil. There are rules to follow. It's my task to make sure you do. Consider this a friendly reminder. Get with the f***ing program."

Episode 3 No Rest No Peace

Cogliostro stands over Spawn when he recovers from violator's attack. He tells Spawn to use his powers sparingly that they are finite. Spawn wants to know what's going on with him and why is he here." Spawn wants to know what the old man knows. "There is a war on between Heaven and Hell and you are on the front lines," Cogliostro tells him. "Earth is the battle ground. Human souls, the prize." Spawn knows he has a chance to make, but what is it?

In the meantime Overkill has left a message written in blood on the wall of the alley. The message is a challenge to Spawn. Assassin versus Hellspawn. The battle is fast and furious. Spawn does serious damage to the hulking Overkill and sends him packing, but the battle is not without cost. Spawn is weakened by the fray and is one step closer to his final descent into Hell. Such is the way of the Hellspawn.

Frustrated by the battle Spawn resorts to his old ways, the ways of Al Simmons and seeks out weapons to arm himself. He now remembers who and what he was when he lived, a government killer. Armed to the teeth, Spawn escapes the facility and goes after Overkill and Tony Twist. Overkill is reduced to scrap metal and tattered flesh. Tony is given one last warning to stay out of the alley.

In another part of town Wanda has taken on a child killer case that she is convinced is a set up, and Terry is having trouble tracking certain top secret weapon shipments.

An accountant, An assassin known as CHAPEL receives a mission from Jason Wynn. The assignment is to destroy a weapons shipment and frame it on terrorists. Chapel is a man haunted by his past where he may have caused the death of his partner Al Simmons.

Billy Kincaid's cellar. Billy is carefully placing surgical tools into a plastic fishing tackle box. He wears his ice-cream vendor uniform and after shutting the box, he adjusts his white cap in a neatly well-brushed shaving mirror. In the background Clown crouches and watches Billy with great interest.

Episode 4 Dominoes

While Spawn waits for the next event in the battle between Heaven and Hell, Tony Twist tries to make amends with the big man after he dispatches of Overkill. But there is a new player in the game now. A mysterious and beautiful woman called ANGELA. She too is a warrior, a hunter who fights for the other side and works for a woman named GABRIEL. Angela wants to know why she was not informed about the Hellspawn, and demands the job of hunting him down. She is refused the job and dismissed.

Wanda receives inside information from an ex-cop MAX that proves her theory that somebody is trying to frame a child killer. She is determined to find out who is behind the cover up. All the while Spawn is on her trail watching and protecting.

Terry has reported the missing weapons to Jason Wynn, but Wynn gets him off the rack by showing him footage of the armory break in where Spawn stole weapons. Chapel is sent to talk to Tony Twist because Wynn wants to know what the thing was that stole the weapons and destroyed Overkill. He wants Spawn found, and when Wynn says jump, you ask, how high. The stakes are raised. Now Spawn has everybody after him: Wynn, the mob, and Heaven and Hell.

Spawn is tormented by an onslaught of nightmares. Wanda's happiness with Terry, Chapel killing, burning in Hell and Clown laughing all the while. He awakens, still dazed and Spawn and still hopelessly lost in the world that has turned its back on him.

Episode 5 Souls In The Balance

Warriors can feel forces massing against them. The approaching war for control becomes a war of the churning and twisting their dark souls. Feeding this rage that boils deep within every Hellspawn, they rage at the weakness of their plight.

Rat-City. A crazed street preacher holds a boy against his will. His weapons are his madness and his body wrapped in grenades. Several cops are dead to his shrieks helplessly trying to free the boy from the preacher's grasp. An angry cop takes out his frustration on Gareb. Spawn is forced to intercede and violently attacks the rampaging officer. Angered by the cop's abuse of power, he leaves the cop pinned to a wall as a message to others.

Meanwhile, Jason Wynn's political puppet Senator McMillian is hard on the campaign trail. Wynn is unhappy with several of the Senator's political moves and suggests that he follow his directions more closely. Wynn has a strangle hold on the senator and the senator must obey. To make matters worse Wynn has caught wind that Wanda is digging around the personnel data bases in search of facts to uncover the child killer cover up.

The Alley. Detectives Burke and Twitch search the alleys for evidence of a kidnapping perpetrated by the psychotic priest. They realize that the alley is the same one where the reporter's body was found. In addition to being the dumping ground for the currently at-large child killer. Not to mention some of Tony Twist's recently slaughtered hit men. Twitch suspects the coincidence isn't one at all but is ordered to pursue it to stay Burke who is anxious to confront the priest.

Burke and Twitch are startled by a dying cop in the alleyway stuffed into a shopping cart. Spawn had pinned the cop to a cement wall, but the juvenile was the priest's doing. The cops dying words refer enigmatically to Spawn: "Red cloak."

Clown tracks down Billy Kincaid, and hands the child killer an invitation. It reads: "FRESH MEAT AND WHAT A TREAT! 2970 RUNYON." The address just happens to be one of Tony Twist's safe houses. Across town Wanda's life takes a horrifying turn when she receives a frightening call telling her that Max has been murdered. When she returns, she finds that Cyan is nowhere to be found. She has been kidnapped.

Back in the alley, Spawn spends his time preparing for the next onslaught of violence. He reads and reloads his stolen arsenal. Cogliostro tells Spawn that his mission has become too personal. Spawn rejects the old man's condemnation and explains that he was trained to be a killer. Then out of the darkness Spawn hears of Cyan's kidnapping. He stands and disappears.

Outside the alley, Burke, Twitch and the SWAT team have the crazed priest cornered but he still has the boy. A sharpshooter fires a well placed slug into the preacher's head. The preacher drops. It appears the situation is over until the preacher sits, compliments the officers shooting, then pulls the pins on all of the grenades. The explosion is massive but luckily for the boy, Spawn has come from the darkness to save him.

Finally having chosen a side, and released of some inner guilt the warrior is now free to pursue his personal mission. God help those in his path.

As the scene fades, the true face of the preacher is exposed. It is Clown trying to shake things up. At the safe house a special guest has appeared to take Cyan from the hands of the kidnappers who have acted on Wynn's behalf. The guest is Billy Kincaid, the child killer and he's more than pleased to see the little girl.

Episode 6 Endgame

After torturing a stool-pigeon Spawn learns that it was Tony Twist who kidnapped Cyan while at the safe house. But Tony's boys have lost the girl to the deadly hands of Billy Kincaid. News of the screw-up travels fast and Jason Wynn confronts Senator McMillian about Billy's actions. McMillian denies any knowledge of his killer son's doings and both men are left wondering who could be behind it.

Wynn believes he senator has nothing to do with the interference and is convinced that there are other players in the mix who are screwing with his plan. He sends Chapel off to track down the weapons. He, while he conducts his next move. Meanwhile, Tony has prepares to leave town knowing the issuing the child will cause him a great deal of trouble. But before he can leave Spawn descends on him, he knows and makes the fat mob boss talk. All Spawn gets out of him is a physical description of Billy and that he drives an ice-cream truck.

Downtown, Twitch has uncovered the Senators bloody secret. He knows that McMillian is hiding a killer son named Billy and that the alley murders began because of an abortion plot he went horribly wrong. The senator used many things to buy the expensive life before he talked to the reporters. Burke takes the explosive information and runs with it. He orders a total and complete manhunt. He wants Billy Kincaid, dead or alive.

Billy's Workshop. Billy bends down and, slowly, lowers the sack around Cyan's bundled form. She is almost sick sweaty with fear. Her huge eyes stare at Billy's massive pocked face. She knows her time is up. Luckily she is very wrong.

Spawn emerges from the shadows. "Move away from the child. Now."

But Billy has other plans. He throws chemicals on the Hellspawn that catch the house and Spawn on fire. Billy races from the scene with Cyan in his grip and leaves Spawn to burn. Outside, the police have located the house and give chase. Spawn recovers from the ill wind and tracks down the ice-cream truck.

Stand-off. Billy is cornered by Spawn but Billy has Cyan and the knife. One by one the players are in the scene as Clown watches from above, laughing at every whiff of pain. Detectives Burke and Twitch are there. Wanda and Terry have been informed of the mayhem and are there, waiting, watching and praying.

Spawn makes his move. He wraps Kincaid in his cape and forces him to the ground. Billy begs for help while Clown cheers Spawn on chanting kill him, kill him over and over. Spawn is tempted but resists the Clown and his own inner rage. He casts the killer to the ground along with the rest of the garbage. Clown is horrified. It wasn't supposed to end like this. All his work was for nothing. Spawn is still resisting and refusing the deal. Angered but not beat Clown kills Billy and vows to Spawn that the fight is far from over. After all a deal is a deal.

In the end Cyan returns safe to Wanda and Terry in her hands she holds a drink from her ordeal and hands it to her mother. It is Al Simmon's wedding band.

"Where did you get this, Cyan?"

The sad man.

For all hellspawns a time comes when the stage is set. All sides have been chosen. The world and rules have been defined. And the real war, the all its apocalyptic horror is finally ready to begin.

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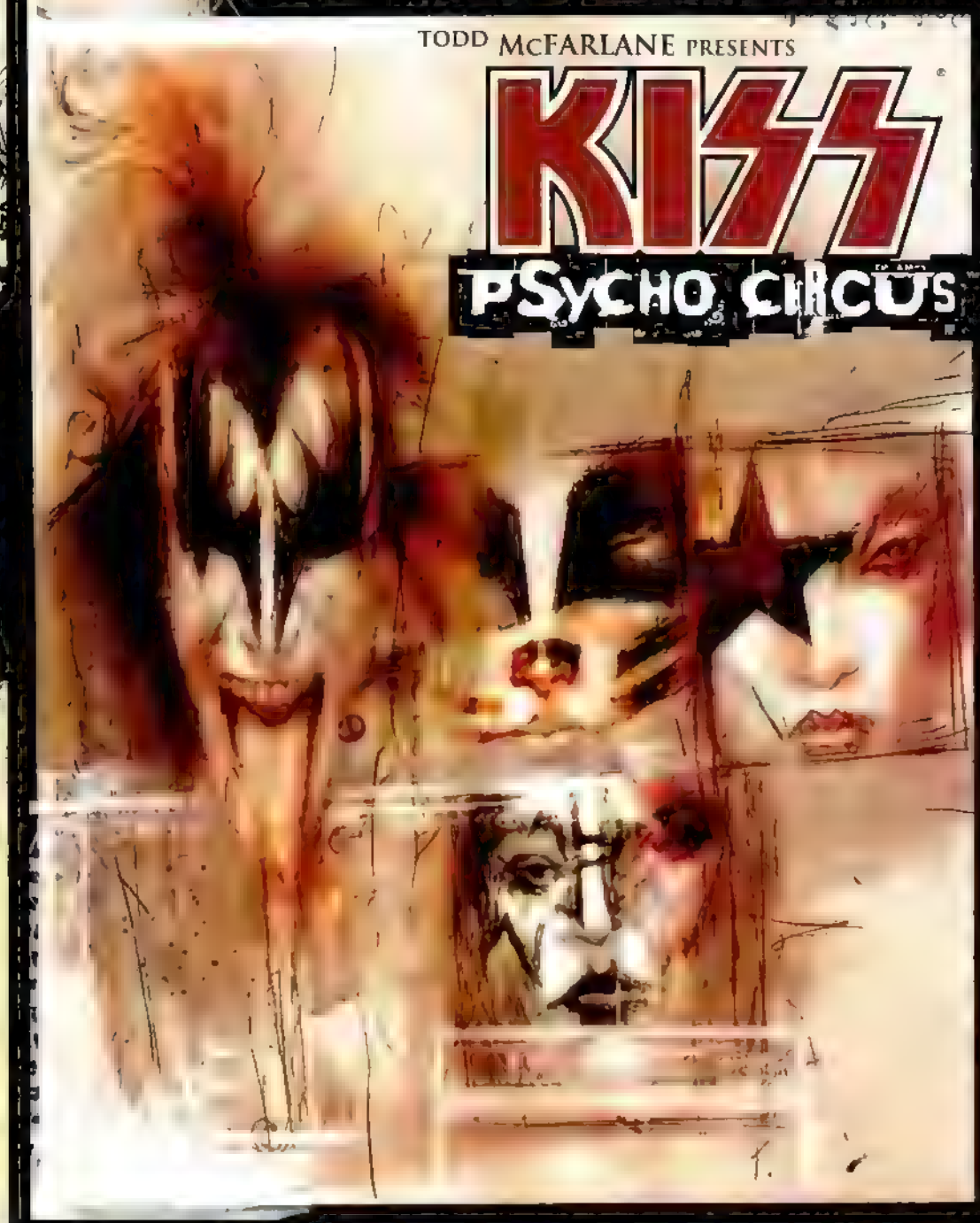

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2

The second issue of the quarterly KISS Psycho Circus magazine from Todd McFarlane Productions.

56 full color pages of KISS Psycho Circus, including books 4 & 5 of the comic book and part 2 of the Gene Simmons/Todd McFarlane interview.

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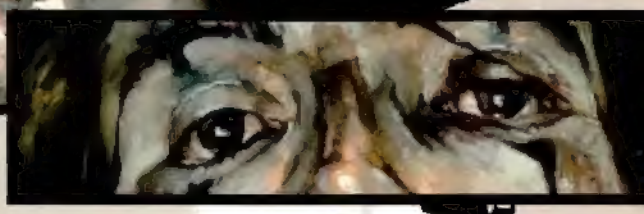

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